

# First Congregational United Church of Christ

*Empowered by the Holy Spirit and with the help of God,  
we open our doors and hearts to all, in service and love as modeled by Jesus Christ.*



*First Sunday of Advent  
Hope*

*The Lord's Day  
First Sunday of Advent  
Hope  
Nine o'clock in the Morning*

## ***The Worship of God***

*Worship is the submission of all our nature to God. It is the quickening of the conscience by God's holiness; the nourishment of the mind with God's truth; the purifying of the imagination by God's beauty; the opening of the heart to God's love; the surrender of the will to God's purpose—all of this gathered up in adoration.*

*~William Temple*

### **The Prologue**

The first Sunday of Advent marks the beginning of the Church Year, the first Sunday on the liturgical calendar. Today begins Year B which is led by the Gospel of Mark including a whole lot of John interspersed to fill out the Sunday lections. Advent means "something is coming! Something is on the way!" Traditionally, Advent contains an interesting trinitarian formula that frames its definition. Christians anticipate with great expectation the coming of the Christ Child in the person of Jesus at his birth; the coming of Christ's Spirit into our individual lives, and corporately into the human drama and our wider world in myriad mystical ways; and, the hope for Christ's second coming in what is called in theological parlance, the "parousia," complete with a host of various stark apocalyptic images. This third interpretation is widely debated and doubted by most reputable Biblical scholars. In other words, Jesus is not coming back in the way that the early Church sincerely believed that he would. They thought his return to be imminent, but his permanent delay proved their theory wrong. We are all still here more than 2000 years later! As we enter this holy and blessed season, may the Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love of God come near to us, an Advent of the highest divine order imaginable!

### **Gathering Music**

**The Call to Worship and Welcome**

**The Spirit of the still speaking God be with you.**

**And also with you.**

**The Music for Contemplation**

**The Lighting of the Altar Candles**

The Gathering

O that God would tear open the heavens and come down to meet us!

**We have gathered in this sacred space and time in the fullness of hope,  
anticipating the advent of God in our midst!**

Yet, we know not the day nor the hour when the Holy One will come upon us!

**As a vigilant people, we are always on the lookout, waiting and watching, awake  
to the presence of God, anticipating the coming of Christ into our midst!**

Let us worship the One for whom we anxiously await!

The Choral Introit

*Veni Emmanuel* words, 12<sup>th</sup> century Latin hymn; music, 15<sup>th</sup> century French melody  
Ensemble

The Collect

Let us pray to the Lord,

O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead your children like a flock, you who are enthroned upon the cherubim, we have come before you this day to worship, to bring praises before the God of Advent hope; shine your face upon us this day, God the great shepherd, reminding us of our glorious salvation in you; deliver us from all that separates us from you and from one another, all that diminishes our humanity; awaken us, heavenly God, to your coming into our midst; all this we pray through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the holy and still speaking Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

**Amen.**

\*The Opening Hymn, No. 119    *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*            VENI EMMANUEL

\*The Litany of Praise

The shepherd of Israel has heard the cry of a people who long to be led as sheep in the fold of God!

**The Holy One has stirred among us, bringing to us the day of salvation!**

The face of God has shined upon us, a glorious reminder of the One who saves us when we call, declaring the name of the Holy One!

**God feeds us and quenches our thirst with the fullest measure, restoring us to  
right relationships with all our neighbors!**

The God of hosts has restored the people, the face of the Holy shining upon us, saving each one of us from all that diminishes our human being and doing!

**The hand of the Holy One is upon all humanity, never turning away from us! We  
call upon the name of the Lord forever! Praise the Lord!**

\*The Gloria

GREATOREX

*Glory to the Creator, and to the Christ, and to the Comforter!  
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,  
World without end! Amen! Amen!*

The Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Mike and Sandra Mettler

The Litany of Hope

We light the candle of Hope!

**As this small flame dimly glows, its light subtly illuminates our hearts and minds,  
nudging us gently, lighting the pathways of the Holy!**

Like a branch that becomes tender and puts forth leaves, may the glow of this soft  
flame grow into a raging fire, brightly shining for all to see!

**Our hope is in Emmanuel, faithful and life-giving, hearing us when we call!**

The Hymn for Advent (insert, stanza one) *Hope Is a Candle*

SIMPLY PERFECT

The Lighting of the Candle of Hope

The Call to Confession<sup>1</sup>

As a new Church Year begins as we turn the page on the liturgical calendar, we seek to leave behind any unfaithfulness from our past. We remember our doubt and neglect, the empty times when prayer is forgotten, and our focus is narrowed to petty concerns. God is waiting to hear from us. In the silence and stillness of these moments, let us confess before the Holy.

The Silent Confession

The Corporate Confession<sup>2</sup>

Let us pray to the Lord,

**Shepherd of Israel, we confess the sin of our separation from you. We have blamed you for hiding from us, rather than admitting we have failed to see you in the thousands of ways you are revealing yourself every day. We have not called on you as we should, and we have failed to listen for your call. Without you, we become tiny islands of self-concern. Our links with the rest of your children are stretched and broken. We long for the loving community in which your reign is acknowledged and your purposes are served. Move us to that sacred space, we pray.**

### The Assurance of Pardon<sup>3</sup>

Hear the good news of the hope of Advent! The grace of God has come to us in Christ Jesus. God restores us to a right relationship with the eternal that we might rightfully value ourselves and all persons. Spiritual gifts are ours to claim. God is faithful and will strengthen us in all challenges and circumstances. The Holy One is the eternal source of all things good!

**Thanks be to God!**

### The Time for the Children

Carol Marshall

### The Witness from the Hebrew Bible

ISAIAH 64:1-9

O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence—as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil—to make your name known to your adversaries, so that the nations might tremble at your presence! When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect, you came down. The mountains quaked at your presence! From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for God. You meet those who gladly do right, those who remember you in your ways. But you were angry, and we sinned! Because you hid yourself, we transgressed. We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. There is no one who calls on your name or attempts to take hold of you, for you have hidden your face from us and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity. Yet, O LORD, you are our Father! We are the clay, and you are our potter! We are all the work of your hand! Do not be exceedingly angry, O LORD, and do not remember iniquity forever. Now consider, we are all your people!

Listen to what the Spirit of the still speaking God is saying!

**Thanks be to God!**

### The Singing Response: PSALM 80:1-7, 17-19

CAROL

*O Shepherd, hear and lead your flock! As lambs, we crave your care!  
What strength on earth approaches you, what mercies can compare?*

*Restore to us a saving faith, the radiance of your face  
to lighten and reveal the gift of your redeeming grace!*

*Our selfish prayers deserve your wrath, our pride, a sudden burst!  
We have but stones to serve as bread, and tears to quell our thirst!*

*Restore to us a saving faith, the radiance of your face!  
To lighten and reveal the gift of your redeeming grace!*

*Your lineage, like a vine, once spread and flourished in the land,  
But now the vineyard fails, the fruit lies withered in the sand!*

*Restore to us a saving faith, the radiance of your face!  
To lighten and reveal the gift of your redeeming grace!*

The Witness from the Gospels

MARK 13:24-37

“But in those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in clouds’ with great power and glory. Then he will send out the angels and gather the elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven. ‘From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.’ But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert, for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep awake, for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening or at midnight or at cockcrow or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake!”

The Gospel for today!

**Thanks be to God!**

The Sermon

*Just Chill!*

Timothy W. Shirley

The Anthem

*Soon and Very Soon*

André Edward Crouch

Chancel Choir

The Service of Holy Communion

The Concerns of the Church

The Pastoral Prayer

The Lord’s Prayer

**Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name.  
Thy kingdom come! Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread and  
forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.  
And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.  
For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever!  
Amen.**

The Receiving of Our Gifts

The Offertory

\*The Doxology

OLD HUNDREDTH

*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow!  
Praise Christ all creatures here below!  
Praise Holy Spirit, evermore!  
Praise triune God whom we adore!*

\*The Prayer of Thanksgiving

\*The Closing Hymn (insert) *Come, O Long-Expected Jesus*

STUTTGART

\*The Extinguishing of the Altar Candles

\*The Procession of the Light

\*The Benediction

\*The Fellowship Song *Let There Be Peace on Earth*

WORLD PEACE

*Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me!*

*With every step I take, let this be my joyous creed!*

*To take each moment and live each moment in peace, eternally!*

*Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me!*

## The Music for Reflection

\*You are invited to stand as you are able.

Lector: Kay Scharpf

Ushers: Susan Krivichi and Mike Mettler

*The color for the season of Advent in many churches is Blue, symbolizing royalty, this color has a long tradition in the history of the Church. Reflecting the seasonal images of hope and anticipation, and relating to Mary, the mother of our Lord, Blue is once more being used. Other churches, including First Congregational United Church of Christ, continue to use Purple.*

***The Flowers adorning the Chancel for today's worship  
are given by Tom Helmick in honor of Barbara's birthday.***

***The rose on the Chancel is in honor of Alec Christopher Ligocki  
who was born on November 28<sup>th</sup> to Tess and Rocky Ligocki,  
daughter and son-in-law of proud grandparents, Mark and Kathy Holperin.***

<sup>1-3</sup>Reprinted by permission United Church Press from *Taught by Love*, by Lavon Bayler. Copyright 2002 by The Pilgrim Press.

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### **CHURCH STAFF**

*Timothy W. Shirley, Pastor*

*Debbie Brown, Church Administrator*

*Sharon Breit, Director of Christian Education*

*Lori Lee Hunter, Director of Music*

*Linda Brainard, Pianist*

*Norma Yaeger, Pianist*

*Christine Clough, Cleaning Service*

*Eric Olsen*

*Deb Stolze*

*Clerk, Norma Yaeger*

*Pastor Parish Relations, Tobi Johamsen*

*Women's Fellowship, Sharon Breit*

*Sanctuary Arts Group, Patti Roberts*

*Facilities, Donna Adams*

*Finance, Paula Hendrickson*

*Gifts and Endowments, Bill Marshall*

*Safety and Security, Carlton Schroeder*

*Scholarship, Ursula Charaf*

*Service Support Team, Joy Turpin*

### **CHURCH COUNCIL**

*President, Donna Adams*

*Kristen Anchor*

*Steve Burrill*

*Carol Marshall*

*Trisha Moore*

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First Congregational UCC - Eagle River, WI

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